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ABSTRACT

This survey of Ohio adults was intended to gauge attitudes on a range of educational issues. Key findings included: (1) public schools get a grade of C+; (2) Ohioans underestimate the extent of the challenge facing urban school districts; (3) they favor testing in math and reading every year in grades 3-8; (4) Ohioans believe in more school-community cooperation; (5) they overestimate the cost of a public college or university by about $6,000 per year; (6) respondents recognize the importance of literacy in early childhood; (7) more than half think school funding has stayed the same or decreased, although it has increased; and (8) only about half knew the state supreme court was deciding a case that could find Ohio's system of school funding to be unconstitutional. Detailed findings are presented in the areas of the state of schools, schools as centers of community, college access and higher education, early childhood education, funding education in Ohio, and DeRolph versus the State of Ohio. (EV)

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Ohio's Education Matters:
2001-2002 Poll

Knowledgeworks Foundation

2002

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1

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About KnowledgeWorks Foundation

History

KnowledgeWorks Foundation was created in 1998 as a charitable foundation through the reorganization of the Student Loan Funding Corporation. With more than $200 million in assets, KnowledgeWorks Foundation is Ohio's largest public education philanthropy.

Our Operating Philosophy

KnowledgeWorks Foundation is dedicated to removing barriers to education for all individuals. We believe in universal access to educational opportunities for individuals to achieve success and for the betterment of society. This is best accomplished through real collaboration with public and private entities. We provide funding, participation and leadership for education initiatives throughout Ohio.

Why We Conducted this Poll

KnowledgeWorks Foundation looks for ways to offer practical solutions to tough problems. A cornerstone of this effort is to understand and engage the public into the problem-solving process, which is why KnowledgeWorks Foundation has sponsored this poll. The public's thoughts and opinions are used in several ways. First, opinions from this poll help inform public policy by helping decision-makers better understand Ohio's needs and the best alternatives to meeting these needs. Second, the poll allows us to test our concepts and priorities with those of the public, allowing us to create, validate or modify programs and to assure they are relevant and effective. Third, polling creates a baseline against which we can measure ensuing progress.

This is the fourth year of KnowledgeWorks Foundation operations and second year of polling. As with the 2000-01 poll, this research has provided several key insights and lessons that we will be using throughout the year in the following areas of focus and action.

Areas of Focus and Action

Universal Access to Higher Education

KnowledgeWorks Foundation is committed to ensuring that Ohio students have the information and financial resources they need to access post-secondary education. The goal of supporting college access initiatives is to increase degree attainment rate in Ohio, not only for the development of each student but also in support of Ohio's economic future. In 1999, the Foundation helped form the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) to promote access to college by sharing information among existing access programs and creating new access programs in under-served areas.

Creating Learning Environment

More than half of Ohio's schools are 50 years old or older and many of Ohio's urban school districts are struggling. To remedy the situation, the State of Ohio has proposed a plan to spend more than $23 billion on new school construction over the next 12 years, allocating $10.2 billion to school construction, matched by $12.9 billion in local dollars. KnowledgeWorks Foundation will support community engagement initiatives to improve the school facilities planning processes and ensure that the substantial amount of local and state funds are used effectively by: (1) infusing the local planning process with information about the impact of school facilities on learning outcomes, and (2) promoting the concept of "schools as centers of community," where school district leadership involves the community in school facility planning and school buildings have multiple uses for the benefit of the community.

Educational Opportunity for Children in Substitute Care

KnowledgeWorks Foundation is committed to ensuring that children in substitute care (foster care, kinship care, etc.) receive the education necessary to become successful, productive adults. To this end, the Foundation supports initiatives that address special curriculum needs, provide training, case consultation, and advocacy, and document the education needs and obstacles for children in substitute care in Ohio.

Quality Early Childhood Education

To ensure normal, healthy development, each child must be immersed in a healthy and stimulating environment encouraging literacy and learning which begins at birth. KnowledgeWorks Foundation is refining its work to support early childhood education recognizing the many needs that must be met to improve learning for young children and prepare them for school.

Educational Opportunity for Low-Wage Workers

KnowledgeWorks Foundation will support programs that train and educate low-wage workers. Research has demonstrated that increasing the educational attainment of those at the lowest rung of the wage ladder leads to greater opportunities to achieve real wage gains. However, low-wage workers frequently face barriers such as academic anxiety, a lack of knowledge of the higher education process, and childcare issues that hinder their attainment of academic credentials. The Foundation believes that Ohio's community and technical colleges are well-positioned to serve the education needs of low-wage working adults. The Foundation's goals for this issue area are:

- to promote systems change leading to improved post-secondary educational opportunities for low-wage workers through Ohio's community colleges;
- to promote collaborative efforts among Ohio's community college campuses and government, community-based organizations and/or businesses that address the unique education needs of low-wage workers; and
- to assist the local efforts with the best available models and research about commu nity college programs geared toward low-wage working adults.

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About Paul Werth Associates

As in 2000-01, Paul Werth Associates conducted this poll on behalf of KnowledgeWorks Foundation. Paul Werth Associates is a full-service public relations, public affairs and marketing communications firm that provides research, strategic counsel and implementation of results-driven communications programs to help clients build successful relationships with their constituents. The firm has attained a national reputation for its high quality, pragmatic approaches to communications challenges.

As a result, the firm has won numerous awards from professional associations for campaigns carried out on behalf of clients. Paul Werth Associates is the only public relations firm with headquarters in Ohio to have won the prestigious Silver Anvil Award—the highest national honor of the Public Relations Society of America—nine times.

Founded in 1963, Paul Werth Associates is a member of the Council of Public Relations Firms, the first organization representing the business of public relations.

Research Services

Werth's in-house Research Services division provides clients with research-driven insights in viewpoints of key audiences in support of relationship building efforts. The group specializes in the management and execution of complex research challenges in areas ranging from public opinion sampling and marketing image studies to employee and customer satisfaction assessments. Services include research and survey design, focus group facilitation, interview execution, data analysis and interpretation, presentation of research findings and action planning.

Methodology

The 2001-02 Ohio's Education Matters public opinion poll was designed by Paul Werth Associates' Research Services Group and the KnowledgeWorks Foundation. Strategic Research Group (SRG), based in Columbus, Ohio, was responsible for sample selection and survey implementation.

Because one issue of interest in the current poll was public awareness of, and reaction to, the Ohio Supreme Court case *DeRolph vs. the State of Ohio*, a repeated-measures design was used to measure attitudes and awareness before and after key events in the case. The first panel was conducted in September 2001. Strategic Research Group (SRG) randomly selected and interviewed adult residents of Ohio regarding educational issues in the state. Respondents were asked at the end of this survey if they would consent to be called back within the next few weeks and asked some additional questions. Of the 505 respondents who completed surveys during the initial panel, 442 respondents answered "yes" to participating in the follow-up panel.

To conduct the follow-up survey, SRG began calling all 442 consenting respondents on November 27, 2001. Up to six attempts were made to reach all consenting respondents from the initial panel. A total of 323 surveys were completed during the follow-up panel.

Quality Assurance

Data were collected by SRG's professional telephone interviewing staff. Interviewers received extensive training in interviewing skills as well as additional project-specific training, including a read-through of the survey on paper and a review of rotation patterns, response categories, and response codes. Beginning November 26, 2001, all interviewers were trained on the second panel questionnaire, addressing any important changes and special procedures.

As part of SRG's standard quality assurance procedures, approximately 35% of all surveys were monitored and approximately 15% of all surveys were verified. All survey responses were checked for completeness by both the Survey Director and Survey Supervisors, and any missing or incomplete information was re-recorded following the completion of the survey.

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Ohio's Education Matters:
KnowledgeWorks Foundation 2001-2002 Poll

Executive Summary

State of the Schools

Overall, **Ohio's citizens gave Ohio public schools a grade of C+**. Ohioans are divided as to whether they feel the schools are on the right or wrong track, with 50% optimistic about the direction of Ohio's public schools, 39% pessimistic, and 10 % unsure. In contrast, Ohioans were more favorable in regard to their local public schools, which, as in 2000-01, received about a B. Sixty-two percent were optimistic about the future direction of their local public schools, 29% pessimistic, and 9% unsure.

Urban school districts face significant challenges to reach a point where graduation rates, currently at 59.6%, approach the state average of 80.4 %. Ohioans recognize that urban school districts' graduation rates are lower than the state average, but **Ohioans underestimate the extent of the challenge**—respondents estimate urban graduation rates to be approximately 66.4 %, on average. In reality, graduation rates in Ohio's 21 urban districts average 59.6%. Graduation rates at Ohio's "Big 8" urban school districts average 53.9%, ranging from a high of 72.4% in Akron City Schools to a low of 33.7% in Cleveland City Schools. Ohioans, especially those in urban areas, must recognize that their involvement in local schools is important to address this significant issue.

Overwhelmingly, Ohioans favor testing in math and reading every year in grades three through eight. Although more than 80% agreed annual tests should be administered, only 52% agreed that testing is the best measure of school performance and just 44.5% agreed that testing is the best measure of teacher performance. Thus, test results may be viewed as just one component of a comprehensive solution to diagnosing and improving student performance.

Many Ohioans (47%) believe that Ohio's current academic standards are "about right," although a substantial proportion, 39%, believes current standards are "too low." Less than 10% of Ohioans surveyed believed current standards were too high.

Schools as Centers of Community

Ohioans believe that everyone in **the community should be more involved** with local schools, and that **schools should be community resources** offering programs and services beyond the traditional school hours. Although 87% agree that "everyone in the community should be more involved with local public schools," many may not be aware of volunteer opportunities. When asked what they would be willing to do to help their local schools (an open-ended question), 22% said they didn't know how they could help.

Although 80% agree up-to-date facilities contribute to better education, only 43% indicate they would support an increase in property taxes to build a new school. If the new school facility provides multipurpose facilities or a community center, support for a levy increased to 63%. Ohioans appreciate the benefits of schools as a "center for the community."

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College Access and Higher Education

Persistent myths appear to be costing Ohio's high school students the opportunity to secure a higher education. On average, Ohioans overestimate the average cost of a public college or university by approximately $6,000 per year. If people do not understand the value of pursuing higher education or do not recognize available financial assistance options, they are likely to make decisions that are not in their own long-term interests. Furthermore, Ohioans may not recognize the significance of other factors in increasing college enrollment and graduation such as mentoring, academic preparation, and understanding of the application process. High school students need help from adults around them to make important decisions in pursuing higher education.

Early Childhood Education

As in 2000, survey respondents **recognized the importance of literacy in early childhood**. Nearly 81% believed that children who attend preschool or Head Start are better prepared when they enter first grade, and 73% were in favor of publicly-funded preschool programs for all Ohio children.

Despite a strong belief in the need for early childhood activities to stimulate literacy, however, there was less consensus regarding educational standards for child care professionals; although 59% agreed that professionals providing child care to children ages 3-5 should be required to complete at least two years of college, 35% disagreed with such a requirement.

Funding Education in Ohio

In the past five years, **Ohio's legislature has increased funding for K-12 public schools—yet 53.3% of Ohioans think funding stayed the same or decreased**. State spending on primary and secondary education totaled $5.1 billion in fiscal year 1997 and $7.1 billion in fiscal year 2001, an increase of 40% over the five-year period. There was also an increase in spending as a percentage of the state budget, from 35.0% in fiscal year 1997 to 37.5% in fiscal year 2001.

Knowledge matters. People who are aware of the increases in funding are less likely to believe that increased spending will directly result in improvements; people who think funding decreased or stayed the same are significantly more likely to believe that increased spending will result in improvements. Thus, those who are aware of recent increases may recognize that funding is not a singular solution. As more and more people understand the facts about funding, there may be greater pressure to demonstrate results for the investment and a need to showcase innovative approaches to improvements in education.

As additional investments are made, Ohioans believe funding should be targeted at increasing the quality of student/teacher interactions through **reduced class size, improved facilities, better teaching resources, or better preparation for teachers**.

DeRolph vs. the State of Ohio

On May 9, 1991, Dale R. DeRolph, on behalf of his son Nathan, filed a lawsuit, along with five school districts, against the state of Ohio stating the school funding system is unconstitutional. The lawsuit began a course of action that has resulted in three major Ohio Supreme Court decisions including the most recent (*DeRolph III*) on September 6, 2001, in which the Ohio Supreme Court ruled Ohio's school funding system unconstitutional, and mandating the legislature to make changes to the system. As of February 2002, a court-appointed mediator is attempting to reach a settlement or the case goes back to the Ohio Supreme Court.

Despite extensive media coverage, **only 50.6% of Ohioans knew that Ohio's Supreme Court was deciding a lawsuit that could find Ohio's system of school funding to be unconstitutional** and those who are aware of the case don't feel that they know very much (5.8% know "a lot" and 15.3% know "a little"). Of the people that were aware of the case, 62.9% agree that the Ohio Supreme Court needs to be involved.

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I. State of the Schools

Urban school districts face significant challenges to reach a point where graduation rates, currently at about 59.6%, approach the state average of 80.4%. Ohioans recognize that urban school districts' graduation rates are lower than the state average, but underestimate the extent of the challenge—respondents estimate urban graduation rates to be approximately 66.4%, on average. It is important for Ohioans to understand the extent of the challenge and the cost of not acting to expand their involvement in addressing a difficult set of issues.

Key Findings

Overall, Ohio's citizens gave Ohio public schools a grade of C+, with no significant change over ratings made in 2000. Ohioans are divided, though, as to whether they feel the schools are on the right or wrong track, with nearly 50% optimistic about the direction of Ohio's public schools, 39% pessimistic, and 10% unsure. In contrast, Ohioans were more favorable in regard to their local public schools, which, as in 2000, received about a B. Sixty-two percent were optimistic about the future direction of their local public schools, 29% pessimistic, and 9% unsure.

Although citizens' ratings of the schools were virtually unchanged from last year, according to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), three out of four Ohio school districts improved on the state's 27 standards, which include passage rates on proficiency tests as well as graduation and attendance rates. According to ODE[1], 75% of the state's school districts (457 districts) improved on the 2002 Local Report Card by one or more indicators; 14% (93 school districts) remained the same; and 9% (57 school districts) declined.

Survey respondents were also asked about the quality of the education provided by Ohio's public high schools. Nearly two-thirds of Ohioans agreed that graduating high school seniors receive the necessary training to succeed both in standard college courses as well as in the workplace. However, survey respondents tended to underestimate Ohio's overall high school graduation rate; although the average estimate made by survey respondents was 73%, the actual graduation rate for 1999-2000 as reported by the Ohio Department of Education in the 2001 State Report Card was 80.4%.

Survey respondents were also asked to estimate Ohio's urban graduation rate. Respondents did estimate the graduation rate in urban districts to be slightly lower than the overall graduation rate, with an average estimate of 66.4%, a statistically significant difference from the overall estimated graduation rate of 73%. However, this estimate is still considerably higher than the actual urban graduation rates reported by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE).

According to ODE, graduation rates in urban districts[2] are in some cases substantially lower than the overall state graduation rate. Among Ohio's "Big 8" urban districts[3] in 1999-2000, graduation rates range from a high of 72.4% in Akron City Schools to a low of 33.7% in Cleveland City Schools. According to ODE, the average graduation rate for Ohio's 21 urban districts was 59.6%, and the average graduation rate for the Big 8 was 53.9%. Even respondents who described their own school districts as "urban" tended to overestimate graduation rates slightly, with an average estimated urban graduation rate of 68.1%. Thus, although the general public may be aware that graduation rates are lower in urban districts, the real extent of the problem may not be fully appreciated.

[1] Ohio Department of Education press release, 1/7/02.
[2] The Ohio Department of Education defines "urban" districts as those having an average daily membership (i.e., student enrollment) of 5,000 or more and an Aid to Dependent Children population of more than five percent.
[3] The "Big 8" includes Akron City, Canton City, Cincinnati City, Cleveland City, Columbus City, Dayton City, Toledo City, and Youngstown City Schools.

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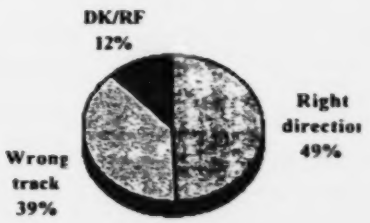
Survey Results

Students are often given the grades A through F to describe the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools, kindergarten through 12th grade in Ohio, were graded in the same way. Using the A through F scale, how would you grade Ohio's public schools, in general?

	2000	2001
A	5.9%	6.9%
B	29.1%	31.5%
C	41.5%	39.1%
D	12.5%	8.3%
F	3.8%	3.4%
Don't know (DK)	6.9%	10.3%
Refused (RF)	.4%	.4%

Generally speaking, would you say that Ohio's public schools are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten on the wrong track?

Right direction	49.4%
Wrong track	38.5%
DK	11.9%
RF	<1.0%

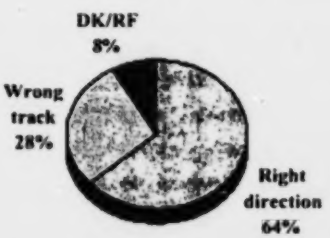


Using the scale of A through F, what grade would you give your local public schools, grades K-12?

	2000	2001
A	12.6%	16.5%
B	36.4%	36.7%
C	30.2%	28.6%
D	12.3%	9.3%
F	5.3%	4.2%
DK	3.2%	4.6%
RF	–	<1.0%

Generally speaking, would you say that your local public schools are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten on the wrong track?

Right direction	61.7%
Wrong track	29.4%
DK	8.9%



Approximately what do you estimate Ohio's overall high school graduation rate to be? Specifically, what percentage of 9th graders goes on to graduate with a high school diploma in four years?

	Estimates	
	2000	2001
Mean	73.3%	72.8%
Median	75.0%	75.0%
State graduation rate:	***81.4%***	***80.4%***

Approximately what do you estimate Ohio's urban high school graduation rate to be? Specifically, what percentage of 9th graders goes on to graduate with a high school diploma in four years?

	Estimate
	2001
Mean	66.4%
Median	70.0%
Average, 21 urban districts*:	***59.6%***
Average, Big 8 only*:	***53.9%***

2000-01 Big 8 Graduation Rates*	
Akron City	**72.4%**
Toledo City	**66.9%**
Columbus City	**61.5%**
Youngstown City	**59.0%**
Dayton City	**56.5%**
Canton City	**53.1%**
Cincinnati City	**51.0%**
Cleveland City	**33.7%**

*Source: Ohio Department of Education

Graduating high school students have the necessary skills and course material to succeed in standard college courses.

Strongly agree	6.8%
Agree	54.8%
Disagree	26.9%
Strongly disagree	4.6%
DK	6.8%

Graduating high school students have the necessary skills and training to succeed in full time jobs.

Strongly agree	6.2%
Agree	55.7%
Disagree	25.4%
Strongly disagree	5.6%
DK	7.1%

To you personally, is it important or unimportant that Ohio offers one of the best education systems in the nation?

	2000	2001
Very important	73.3%	81.2%
Somewhat important	17.0%	13.3%
Somewhat unimportant	5.7%	–
Very unimportant	1.0%	2.6%
DK	2.8%	3.0%
RF	<1.0%	–

Ia. Standards and Assessment: Key Findings

> Ohioans favor testing in math and reading every year in grades three through eight. Many respondents are skeptical, however, about the value of such test results as a singular measure of school or teacher performance. Thus, test results may be viewed as just one component of a comprehensive solution to improve student performance.

Many Ohioans (47%) believe that Ohio's current academic standards are "about right," although a substantial proportion, 39%, believes current standards are "too low." Less than 10% of Ohioans surveyed believed current standards were "too high." Generally speaking, respondents supported standardized testing, with 83% agreeing that students should be tested annually in reading and math in grades three through eight. Far fewer respondents, however, believed that teachers should align courses and course material around the content of standardized academic tests; 53.2% agreed with this sentiment and 44% disagreed.

Furthermore, despite support for annual testing in math and reading, there appeared to be some reticence toward using test results to measure school or teacher performance. Although more than 80% agreed annual tests should be administered, only 52% agreed that testing is the best measure of school performance and just 44.5% agreed that testing is the best measure of teacher performance. Thus, although there is support for use of tests as measurement tools, respondents seem to be cautious in relying on them as the most important way to measure schools or teachers.

Survey Results

Would you say that the academic standards for students in Ohio are too high, are too low, or are about right?

Much too high	1.8%
Somewhat too high	6.3%
About right	46.8%
Somewhat too low	29.6%
Much too low	9.7%
DK	5.8%

Students should be tested in reading and math every year in grades three through eight.

Strongly agree	30.7%
Agree	52.0%
Disagree	10.8%
Strongly disagree	4.6%
DK	1.9%

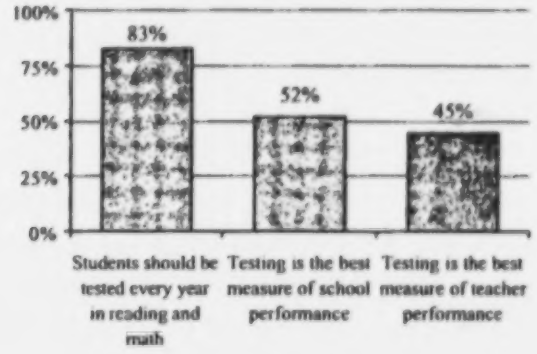
Testing is the most important measure of teacher performance.

Strongly agree	8.0%
Agree	36.5%
Disagree	40.2%
Strongly disagree	13.6%
DK	1.5%

Testing is the most important measure of school performance.

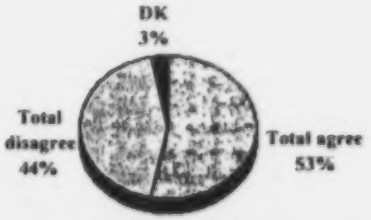
Strongly agree	9.3%
Agree	42.7%
Disagree	32.2%
Strongly disagree	13.6%
DK	2.2%

Attitudes toward standardized testing



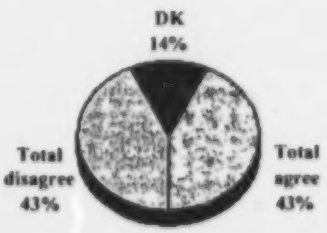
Teachers should align courses and course material around the content of standardized academic tests.

Strongly agree	7.4%
Agree	45.8%
Disagree	30.0%
Strongly disagree	14.2%
DK	2.5%



Standardized academic tests are biased against minorities or students who are not proficient in English.

Strongly agree	11.1%
Agree	31.9%
Disagree	31.3%
Strongly disagree	11.8%
DK	13.9%



Ib. Potential Investments and Policies: Key Findings

Investments

> Ohioans believe that investments are needed to improve Ohio's education system—55% feel funding should be increased while 4.6% feel funding should be decreased. Many do not know, however, that the investment process has already started—53.3% believe that Ohio's legislature has kept funding the same or decreased it over the past five years compared to 37.9% that recognize funding for K-12 has been increased.
>
> Ohioans feel that funding should be targeted at increasing the quality of student-teacher interactions through reduced class size, better teaching resources, or better preparation for teachers.

Survey respondents were presented with a list of potential investments of money that might improve Ohio's public schools. Respondents rated these options in two ways. First, respondents were asked to rate each option in terms of its importance for improving the quality of education in Ohio. Second, respondents were asked to pick the single most important option of the list.

Based on both of these methods, six options were judged to be most important:

- Hire more teachers to reduce class sizes.
- Purchase current textbooks and computers for students.
- Increase teacher training to raise student achievement.
- Provide higher salaries for teachers to retain qualified teachers.
- Renovate or build new school facilities to update them and address overcrowding.
- Purchase new curriculum and additional teaching materials.

When participants individually rated each option, no statistically significant differences in ratings among these six options emerged. When asked which single investment option was most important, "hire more teachers to reduce class sizes" was selected most often as the most important option to improve education in Ohio.

Now, I'm going to read you a list of potential investments of money that have been recommended to improve Ohio's public schools. For each one, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, very unimportant, or if you have no opinion one way or the other about whether the investment is important to improving the quality of education in Ohio.

	Average Rating
Purchase current textbooks and computers for students.	1.35
Hire more teachers to reduce class sizes.	1.46
Increase teacher training to raise student achievement.	1.52
Provide higher salaries for teachers to retain qualified teachers.	1.55
Renovate or build new school facilities to update them and address overcrowding.	1.56
Purchase new curriculum and additional teaching materials.	1.58
Offer new educational after-school programs to enrich student learning.	1.79
Provide more funding to public schools for additional preschool opportunities.	1.85
Provide more funding for charter schools to provide students with options.	2.34
Provide vouchers for children to leave public schools for private schools.	2.63

Ratings were made on a scale of 1 (very important) to 4 (very unimportant).
Means that differ in magnitude by .23 or more are significantly different at the $p < .01$ level.

Of those that you rated as very important, which one would you say is the most important when it comes to improving the public school system in Ohio?

	Most Important (%)
Hire more teachers to reduce class sizes.	20.1%
Provide higher salaries for teachers to retain qualified teachers.	15.5%
Increase teacher training to raise student achievement.	13.9%
Purchase current textbooks and computers for students.	11.5%
Renovate or build new school facilities to update them and address overcrowding.	11.1%
Purchase new curriculum and additional teaching materials.	5.6%
Offer new educational after-school programs to enrich student learning.	4.0%
Provide more funding to public schools for additional preschool opportunities.	2.8%
Provide vouchers for children to leave public schools for private schools.	2.8%
Provide more funding for charter schools to provide students with options.	1.2%
DK	2.5%

Policies

> In addition to state funding responsibilities, Ohioans also feel that the state's public schools can be improved through increased involvement of adults such as parents, teachers, school administrators, and community volunteers in the lives of the students and operations of the schools.

Following the same method described for investments, respondents were presented with a list of potential policies to improve Ohio's public schools. From this list, three policies were judged most important:

- Increase parent involvement in the local schools.
- Have stricter discipline in the classroom.
- Evaluate teacher performance to target training and determine if teachers should be removed from the classroom.

Although there were no statistically significant differences in ratings among these three policies, the options "increase parent involvement" and "have stricter discip line" were selected most often as the most important policies of those rated.

Now, I'm going to read you a list of potential policies or actions that have been recommended to improve Ohio's public schools. For each one, please tell me whether you thi nk it is very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, very unimportant, or if you have no opinion one way or the other about whether the policy or action is important to improving the quality of education in Ohio.

	Average Rating
Increase parent involvement in the local schools.	1.28
Have stricter discipline in the classroom.	1.41
Evaluate teacher performance to target training and determine if teachers should be removed from the classroom.	1.43
Set statewide academic standards for what children should learn in key subjects.	1.61
Recruit volunteers for mentoring and tutoring programs.	1.63
Limit school size to make sure each student is well known by at least one adult.	1.70
Keep school buildings open after school and on weekends to offer community services and adult classes.	1.86
Use academic achievement tests to identify under-performing schools.	2.06

Ratings were made on a scale of 1 (very important) to 4 (very unimportant).
Means that differ in magnitude by .20 or more are significantly different at the $p < .01$ level.

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Of those that you rated very important, which one would you say is the most important when it comes to improving the public school system in Ohio?

	Most Important (%)
Have stricter discipline in the classroom.	21.7%
Increase parent involvement in the local schools.	20.1%
Evaluate teacher performance to target training and determine if teachers should be removed from the classroom.	16.4%
Limit school size to make sure each student is well known by at least one adult.	10.5%
Set statewide academic standards for what children should learn in key subjects.	9.3%
Recruit volunteers for mentoring and tutoring programs.	5.0%
Keep school buildings open after school and on weekends to offer community services and adult classes.	3.4%
Use academic achievement tests to identify under-performing schools.	3.1%
DK	2.5%

Many people are talking about the importance of improving Ohio's education system. What do you think should be the top priority to improve our schools? (open-ended response)

Improve teacher quality/more teachers	17.3%
Increase funding/equitable funding	14.2%
Smaller class sizes/more individual attention	12.0%
Discipline	8.4%
Teaching the "basics"	8.4%
Safety	6.7%
Increase parent involvement	6.2%
Better school facilities/new buildings	6.2%
Reading/literacy	5.8%
Computers	4.0%
Increase teacher salaries	4.0%
More well-rounded education	2.7%
Standardized tests	2.2%
Up-to-date curriculum	2.2%
Prayer in school	1.8%
Attendance/keep kids in school	1.8%
More school activities	1.3%
Math	1.3%
Less emphasis on technology	1.3%
Less focus on sports	1.3%
Change leadership	1.3%
Other	11.4%
DK	9.6%

From your perspective, what is the most important obstacle to increasing the quality of education in K-12? (open-ended response)

Lack of parent involvement	22.1%
Better teachers needed	20.0%
Smaller class sizes needed	15.9%
Discipline needed	12.1%
Lack of funding	11.0%
Better salaries for teachers, more support for teachers needed	5.2%
Newer teaching materials needed	4.5%
More teachers needed	4.1%
Politicians and legislature	3.8%
Students should be more involved in activities	2.8%
Poor school facilities	2.1%
Lack of support for learning disabled, disadvantaged students	1.4%
Local districts do not have enough power	1.4%
Need to teach the basics	1.0%
Need to improve the quality of education	1.0%
Too many drop-outs	1.0%
DK	11.9%

II. Schools as Centers of Community

> Ohioans believe that everyone in the community should be more involved with local schools, and that schools should be community resources offering programs and services beyond the traditional school hours. School levy support increases from 43% to 63% if the levy also provides a school that can be used as a multipurpose facility or a community center.

More than half of Ohio's schools are 50 years old or older. To remedy the situation, the state of Ohio has initiated a plan to spend more than $23 billion on new school construction over the next 12 years, allocating $10.2 billion to school construction, matched by $12.9 billion in local dollars. This investment presents an opportunity to create more than new classrooms. It's an opportunity to:

- Re-engage community members in the planning of the new facilities and daily life of the schools
- Foster new partnerships that serve both student needs and community needs
- Infuse the local planning process with information about the impact of school facilities on learning outcomes to create innovative models
- Establish a K-12 education system in Ohio that provides students with a unique and compelling learning environment that is sustainable over the years to come

In the next decade, many Ohio voters will be asked to consider local levies to raise the required local matches for state facilities funds. Work in this issue area will engage communities in understanding the potential benefits of their dollars and participation. Many communities in Ohio and around the United States have made use of learning research and community collaborations to create exciting and successful schools that Ohioans need to know about to gain support for local investments and to develop their own solutions. With access to research information and to the experiences of other communities around the state and the nation, voters and school districts will make better decisions.

Key Findings

Compared to other community organizations such as hospitals or homeless shelters, survey respondents expressed the most interest in volunteering at local public schools. Although 87% agree that "everyone in the community should be more involved with local public schools," many may not be aware of volunteer opportunities. When asked what they would be willing to do to help improve their local schools (an open-ended question), 22% said they didn't know how they could help.

When asked about specific ways they might support local public schools, most expressed at least some willingness to participate in school activities. For example, 82% were willing to attend an art or athletic event, 74% said they might vote for a local levy, 64% said they might participate in a school planning process, and 62% said they might tutor a child. However, although 86% felt members of the community *should* be able to participate in the planning process for a new school, only 46% indicated they *would* be willing to participate themselves. In addition, support for public schools was generally limited to respondents' own districts; 62% said they were <u>not</u> willing to volunteer or donate money to a school outside their district.

There seemed to be a good deal of support for the idea of locating additional community resources and services in local school facilities. For example, when asked if they would support an increase in property taxes to increase school funding, about 57% indicated they would support such an initiative. Despite a strong belief that modern school facilities contribute to better education, however, there was less support for additional funding to build a new school. Although 80% agreed up-to-date facilities contribute to better education, only 43% indicated they would support an increase in property taxes to build a new school. Support for a new school building increased, however, when the facility was presented as a multipurpose building; when asked if they would support a levy for a new school building that would also be a multipurpose facility or community center, 63% of survey respondents indicated they would support it. Thus, presenting a new school as a "center for the community" increased

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public support.
Regarding community use of school facilities, 84% supported community use of facilities during afternoon, evening and weekend hours for activities like health clinics, recreation activities, and parenting and adult education classes. In addition, 72% agreed that community services for adults like adult fitness, community activities and parenting classes should be located and provided within local public schools. Seventy-nine percent agreed that schools should offer mental health services for students, and 65% agreed that community social services for children like health services, dental services and after-school programs should be located and provided within local public schools.

Traditionally, local school facilities have not functioned as the center of local communities. With limited hours of operation and few community services or events currently located in schools, most school facilities are not often used evenings and weekends. Survey respondents, however, expressed significant interest in broadening the use of these facilities. Increasing the use of school facilities would not only provide additional community resources, but may also have the added benefit of getting the community more involved in participating in and improving local schools.

Survey Results

Following the events of September 11, President Bush asked Americans to turn their fears into action by volunteering time to a local organization. If you were going to volunteer time to an organization in your community, how likely are you to volunteer time to:

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Very Likely	Not At All Likely
A neighborhood school	**41.8%**	31.3%	17.0%	9.3%
Emergency service work	**22.3%**	32.3%	27.2	17.0%
A local hospital	**21.1%**	29.1%	27.9%	21.7%
A homeless shelter	**17.0%**	43.0%	22.3%	16.1%

What are you personally willing to do to help improve your local public schools? (open-ended response)

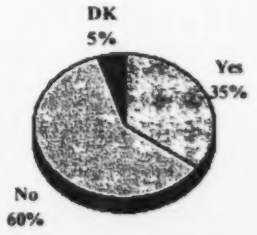
Pay taxes	21.0%
Nothing	16.5%
Vote for levies	15.0%
Volunteer	11.5%
Attend meetings, fundraisers, or activities	8.5%
Tutoring or mentoring	7.5%
Give money	4.5%
Support the school (unspecified)	3.5%
Volunteer in classrooms	3.5%
Stay informed about school boards	2.5%
Support teachers	2.5%
Anything that is necessary	2.0%
Coach athletics	1.5%
Work to eliminate proficiency tests	.5%
Volunteer for after-school programs	.5%
Help with field trips	.5%
Other	12.5%
DK	22.1%

Which of the following would you be willing to do to help your local public schools? Would you be willing to:

	% Yes
Go to an art or athletic event	82.9
Vote for a local levy	74.0
Participate in a planning process to review the goals of a school	63.7
Tutor a child	61.7
Become a mentor for a child	60.5
Make a tax deductible contribution to support your local school	59.1
Help a local high school student get an internship at your workplace	56.0
Coach, teach or organize an extracurricular activity	52.4
Participate in a planning process for a new school building	46.4

Would you be willing to volunteer or donate money to a school outside your district?

Yes	34.9%
No	60.5%
DK	4.6%



Local school boards occasionally ask the voters to approve an increase in their property taxes to help fund the local schools. If your local school board asked for a vote next November to increase property taxes to increase school funding, would you generally be inclined to support it or oppose it?

Strongly favor	33.4%
Somewhat favor	23.5%
Somewhat oppose	13.9%
Strongly oppose	26.3%
DK	2.8%

And, if your local school board asked voters next November for an increase in their property taxes to build a new school, would you generally be inclined to support it or oppose it?

Strongly favor	25.4%
Somewhat favor	18.0%
Somewhat oppose	17.6%
Strongly oppose	33.1%
DK	5.9%

And, if the new school would be constructed as a multipurpose facility that would also be used as a community center, open year-round and in the evenings and on Saturdays, would you generally be inclined to support it or oppose it?

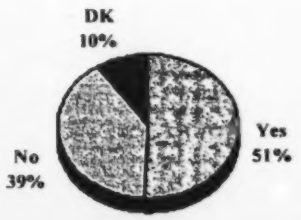
Strongly favor	34.7%
Somewhat favor	28.5%
Somewhat oppose	12.4%
Strongly oppose	19.2%
DK	5.3%

Now let me read to you about a program some people have recommended implementing. This comprehensive after-school program would use public school buildings after school hours five days a week to provide children with fun, enriching learning opportunities that extend beyond schools' traditional academic content, that challenge them, and that give them more individualized attention. Having heard this description would you favor or oppose providing the program to children in your community?

Strongly favor	48.8%
Somewhat favor	30.6%
Undecided	6.0%
Somewhat oppose	5.6%
Strongly oppose	5.0%
DK	3.8%

Would you be willing to pay additional tax dollars for this type of program?

Yes	50.6%
No	39.5%
DK	9.7%



Some people have recommended that public schools be open and available for community members to use during afternoon, evening and weekend hours for activities like health clinics, recreation activities, and parenting and adult education classes. Would you favor or oppose using public schools in your community for these activities?

Strongly favor	56.2%
Somewhat favor	27.8%
Undecided	5.0%
Somewhat oppose	4.2%
Strongly oppose	6.2%
DK	<1.0%

Community social services for children like health and dental services and after-school programs should be located and provided within local public schools.

Strongly agree	13.3%
Agree	51.2%
No opinion	7.5%
Disagree	24.2%
Strongly disagree	2.4%
DK	1.4%

Community programs for adults like adult fitness, community activities and parenting classes should be located and provided within local public schools.

Strongly agree	12.1%
Agree	60.3%
No opinion	6.0%
Disagree	18.5%
Strongly disagree	1.8%
DK	1.4%

Everyone in the community should be more involved with local public schools.

Strongly agree	31.0%
Agree	55.8%
No opinion	3.8%
Disagree	8.5%
Strongly disagree	<1.0%
DK	<1.0%

Schools should offer mental health services for students.

Strongly agree	18.3%
Agree	60.5%
No opinion	5.2%
Disagree	12.7%
Strongly disagree	2.0%
DK	1.4%

Modern, up-to-date school facilities contribute to better education.

Strongly agree	24.4%
Agree	55.8%
No opinion	5.0%
Disagree	12.7%
Strongly disagree	1.4%
DK	.8%

Members of the general public should <u>not</u> be invited to participate in the design and planning of their community's new school facilities.

Strongly agree	2.2%
Agree	7.9%
No opinion	2.6%
Disagree	58.1%
Strongly disagree	27.8%
DK	1.4%

True or false, state government has committed money that can be matched by local money that could result in a total of about $23 billion being spent on building or renovating school buildings in Ohio.

True	45.2%
False	29.6%
DK	24.6%

III. College Access and Higher Education

> Persistent myths that run counter to the facts appear to be costing Ohio's high school students the opportunity to secure a higher education. On average, Ohioans overestimate the cost of a public college or university by $6,000 per year. If people do not understand the value of pursuing higher education or do not recognize available financial assistance options, they are likely to make decisions that are not in their own long-term interests. Furthermore, Ohioans may not recognize the significance of other factors in increasing college enrollment and graduation such as mentoring, academic preparation, and understanding of the application process. Without addressing these issues, high school students may be left without the tools they need to pursue higher education.

Most students face some obstacles in pursuing higher education. These challenges can be financial, academic, rooted in low aspirations or magnified by the complexities of the college admission and financial aid processes. KnowledgeWorks Foundation aims to address these issues. College Access programs create the means to prepare underserved students for college success most effectively. Factors such as early awareness of college opportunities, encouragement, mentors, academic preparation, and parental involvement meaningfully contribute to college enrollment and graduation.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, only 47% of high school students in low income households immediately enroll in postsecondary programs or college, compared to 82% of students in high income households. College Access activities address the needs of students who historically have been underrepresented in higher education and face greater than normal obstacles to pursuing higher education. This population includes academic minorities (African-American, Hispanic-American, and Native American students); first generation college students; low-income students; and Appalachian students.

Trends indicate that educational attainment is closely related with the economic welfare of individuals and the economic well being of the state. Jobs requiring less than a college education are quickly being eliminated; conversely, information-based and knowledge-based jobs are growing much faster than the ready supply of workers. Clearly, the demand for workers with formal postsecondary education will only increase in the foreseeable future.

Postsecondary educational initiatives that promote career development and job advancement opportunities for low-wage workers are also important. Many low-wage workers—especially those who have exited welfare—are limited to low-wage employment because of limited opportunities to enhance their skills. Without educational assistance to advance beyond entry-level employment, many low-wage workers will be relegated to a fragile economic status—just one temporary layoff or child's illness away from the breaking point. More accessible systems of postsecondary education will enable low-wage workers to upgrade their skills and increase their likelihood of career advancement to better paying jobs.

In 1998, nearly one million working Ohioans could be classified as low-wage workers. Research studies have demonstrated that increasing the educational attainment of those at the lowest rung of the wage ladder leads to greater opportunities for real wage gains. However, low-wage workers frequently face barriers such as academic anxiety, a lack of knowledge of the higher education process, and child care issues that hinder their attainment of academic credentials. Adjustments to educational systems to better address the unique needs of low-wage workers could help this educationally underserved group close Ohio's well-publicized deficit in educational attainment.

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Key Findings

As in 2000, Ohio's higher education system was viewed very favorably, with 62% of survey respondents grading Ohio's public colleges and universities an A or B. In addition, respondents were optimistic about the future direction of higher education in the state, with 68% believing higher education in Ohio is on the "right track." Respondents were somewhat less aware of Ohio's two-year community colleges, but generally viewed these institutions favorably as well.

Respondents supported the idea of distance learning, offering course material to people at home in remote locations. Nearly 73% thought it would be a "good idea" to invest in expanding distance learning opportunities.

As in 2000, survey respondents believed in the importance of a college education. In the current survey, 71% felt a college education was "very important," compared with 68% in 2000. Eighty-two percent agreed that anyone can earn a college degree if so motivated, and 70% agreed a degree is important to attain worthwhile employment. However, respondents were slightly less likely to believe that the opportunity for a student to enroll in college has increased. In 2000, 60% believed the opportunity to enroll in college had increased over the last decade compared with 52% in 2001.

Respondents still far overestimate the proportion of adults in the state who have earned a college degree, although estimates in 2001 were significantly lower (thus closer to reality) than in 2000. This year, the average estimate was 40%, compared with an estimate of 48% in 2000. This is still more than double the actual proportion, according to the 2000 Census. Ohio ranks 41 out of 50 states in terms of educational attainment; of Ohioans age 25 or older, just 20.7% have earned a bachelor's degree or more. Although this is a slight increase from the 1990 Census result of 17%, other states saw more significant increases in educational attainment over the past decade.

Furthermore, as in 2000, respondents continue to overestimate the cost of higher education. The average estimate of the cost of one year's tuition at a public four-year college or university was $11,418. Although this estimate has not significantly increased since KnowledgeWorks' 2000 survey, it is still nearly double the actual average cost of tuition at many Ohio public colleges and universities. According to the Ohio Board of Regents, in 1999-2000 the average cost of tuition, fees, books, and supplies was $3,369.00 per year at two-year public colleges, and $5,147.00 per year at four-year public colleges and universities. Current annual tuition and fees for selected Ohio four-year public universities is provided below:

Institution	Undergraduate Tuition and Fees 2001-2002*
Miami University of Ohio	$ 6,981.12
University of Cincinnati	$ 5,991.00
Bowling Green State University	$ 5,764.00
Kent State University	$ 5,598.00
Ohio University	$ 5,493.00
University of Toledo	$ 5,101.68
University of Akron	$ 5,049.60
The Ohio State University	$ 4,788.00
Cleveland State University	$ 4,728.00
Wright State University	$ 4,596.00
Youngstown State University	$ 4,176.00

*Source: College and university websites

When asked about several specific actions that might help increase college graduation rates, three options were seen as most important by survey respondents:

- Offer more scholarships and financial aid
- Lower tuition costs for four-year public universities and colleges
- Emphasize the importance of college to all students, beginning in elementary school

Given the emphasis respondents placed on financial assistance, perceived cost clearly remains a barrier to increasing college attendance and graduation rates. However, other critical barriers, such as lack of encouragement or insufficient academic preparation, may be overlooked. Furthermore, although respondents rated adult educational initiatives to be important, options such as lowering costs for two-year community colleges and technical schools and helping adults access programs at local colleges were generally viewed as less important than efforts aimed at elementary and high school students.

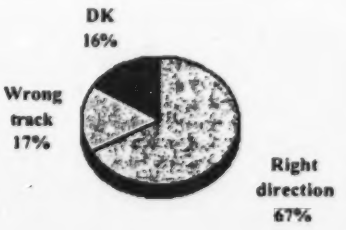
Survey Results

Using the scale of A through F, what grade would you give Ohio's higher education system?

	2000	2001
A	17.8%	16.1%
B	48.0%	45.6%
C	21.3%	24.0%
D	1.6%	3.6%
F	<1.0%	1.0%
DK	10.5%	9.5%

Generally speaking, would you say that Ohio's publicly funded higher education system is going in the right direction, or has it pretty seriously gotten on the wrong track?

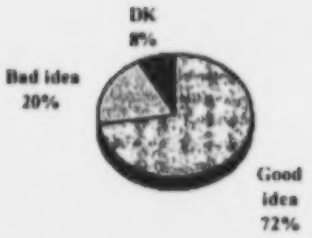
Right direction	67.7%
Wrong track	17.3%
DK	16.1%



In addition to four-year colleges and universities, high school graduates are also taking classes at two-year community colleges. What grade would you give Ohio's two-year community colleges?

A	13.3%
B	44.9%
C	23.5%
D	1.9%
F	<1.0%
DK	16.1%

In recent years, some colleges and universities are utilizing computer and communication technology to offer course material to people at home or in remote locations—not on the campus of the school. This is sometimes called "distance learning." Do you think it is a good idea or bad idea to invest money in expanding distance learning opportunities?



Good idea	72.8%
Bad idea	19.5%
DK	7.7%

In general, do you think that the opportunity for a high school student to enroll in college has increased, decreased, or remained about the same compared to ten years ago?

	2000	2001
Increased greatly	24.1%	24.0%
Increased somewhat	35.8%	28.2%
Stayed the same	23.9%	24.2%
Decreased somewhat	7.1%	11.1%
Decreased greatly	4.5%	6.3%
DK	4.5%	6.2%

Do you, personally, think a college education is very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, very unimportant, or are you undecided?

	2000	2001
Very important	68.4%	71.4%
Somewhat important	25.3%	21.4%
Undecided	4.5%	5.6%
Somewhat unimportant	1.6%	1.2%
Very unimportant	<1.0%	<1.0%

Approximately what percentage of Ohio adults would you estimate have graduated from a college or university with a four-year degree?

	Estimates	
	2000	2001
Mean	47.67%	40.34%
Median	49.00%	40.00%

Ohio's actual college graduation rate ***20.7%***
(2000 U.S. Census)

Approximately how much would you estimate tuition costs at a four-year public college or university in Ohio per student, per year? This would be tuition only, do not include room and board.

	Estimates	
	2000	2001
Mean	$10,903.40	$11,418.13
Median	$8,000.00	$8,000.00

Based on the latest census data available, Ohio ranks 41 out of the 50 states in number of residents who have at least a college or university bachelor's degree. Ohio's ranking dropped from 39th in 1990 to 41st in 2000. People are referring to this as Ohio's "higher education gap." How important are the following actions for closing this "higher education gap?"

	Average Rating
Make information about colleges more understandable and available to all students.	1.58
Emphasize the importance of college to all students, beginning in elementary school.	1.60
Offer more scholarships and financial aid.	1.67
Improve mentoring and college counseling in high schools.	1.70
Help adults access programs at local colleges.	1.86
Lower tuition costs for four-year public universities and colleges.	1.88
Encourage all students to take college preparatory courses in middle school and high school.	1.90
Lower tuition costs for two-year community colleges and technical schools.	1.95

Ratings were made on a scale of 1 (very important) to 4 (very unimportant).
Means that differ in magnitude by .30 or more are significantly different at the $p < .01$ level.

Of those you rated as very important, which one would you say is the most important when it comes to increasing the number of Ohioans with at least a bachelor's degree?

	Most Important (%)
Offer more scholarships and financial aid.	17.6
Lower tuition costs for four-year public universities and colleges.	17.0
Emphasize the importance of college to all students, beginning in elementary school.	13.9
Improve mentoring and college counseling in high schools.	9.6
Encourage all students to take college preparatory courses in middle school and high school.	8.4
Make information about colleges more understandable and available to all students.	8.0
Lower tuition costs for two-year community colleges and technical schools.	5.3
Help adults access programs at local colleges.	2.2

Anyone can earn a college degree if that is what he or she really wants to do.

Strongly agree	28.5%
Agree	53.5%
No opinion	2.4%
Disagree	13.8%
Strongly disagree	1.8%

An education beyond high school is not necessary to achieve worthwhile employment in the 21st century.

Strongly agree	2.6%
Agree	23.8%
No opinion	2.2%
Disagree	49.8%
Strongly disagree	20.4%

IV. Early Childhood Education

> Ohioans understand the importance of early childhood literacy and that preparing children to succeed in school starts before they enter the public or private school system in local communities.

To ensure normal, healthy development, each child must be immersed in a healthy and stimulating environment encouraging literacy. Literacy begins at birth, starting with talking, reading, singing, and playing with a young child. Literacy continues to develop throughout life. However, far too many children begin school unprepared to learn because they do not have the appropriate language and pre-reading skills. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2001), 38%, or 1.4 million, of America's fourth graders cannot read and understand a simple paragraph from an age-appropriate book.

Educators and policymakers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of the first five years of life in the development of children. Before learning to read, children must develop critical pre-reading skills like matching, rhyming, and letter identification. Research has demonstrated that quality early learning programs can have significant and lasting benefits throughout childhood and into adulthood.

Key Findings

As in 2000, survey respondents generally recognized the importance of literacy in early childhood. Nearly 81% believed that children who attend preschool or Head Start are better prepared when they enter first grade, and 73% were in favor of publicly-funded preschool programs for all Ohio children.

Many respondents recognized that early cognitive stimulation was important for child development. Overall, 57% believed that parents should begin reading to their children at birth, although female respondents believed reading should begin earlier than male respondents; 67% of female respondents believed parents should begin reading to their children at birth, compared to just 46% of male respondents. Both male and female respondents, however, were equally likely to agree that teaching children under age 3 colors and shapes helps prepare them to read. Overall, 97% disagreed with the statement, "there is not much you can do to prepare children for school before they are 5 years old."

Despite a strong belief in the need for early childhood activities to stimulate literacy, there was less consensus regarding educational standards for child care professionals; although 59% agreed that professionals providing child care to children ages 3-5 should be required to complete at least two years of college, 35% disagreed with such a requirement.

Survey Results

Do you believe children who attend preschool or Head Start are better prepared or less prepared to learn when they enter the first grade than students who do not attend a preschool program?

Much better	57.1%
Somewhat better	24.0%
Same	7.1%
Somewhat less	1.6%
Much less	<1.0%
DK	9.1%

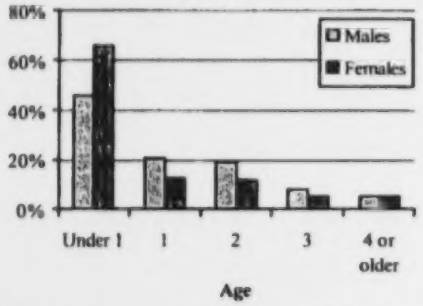
Would you favor or oppose publicly funded preschool programs for all children in Ohio?

Strongly favor	43.5%
Somewhat favor	30.8%
Somewhat oppose	9.5%
Strongly oppose	9.3%
DK	6.7%

At what age do you think parents should begin reading to their children?

Less than 1 year	56.9%
1	16.3%
2	15.3%
3	6.5%
4	2.8%
5	<1.0%
6 or older	1.0%
DK	<1.0%

Males' and females' responses: At what age should parents begin reading to children?



You cannot prepare children under 3 to learn to read by talking to them and teaching them their colors and shapes.

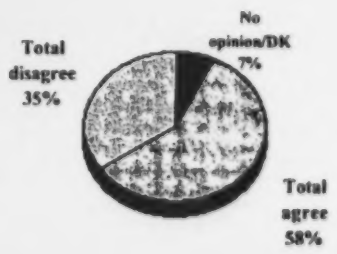
Strongly agree	1.4%
Agree	7.7%
No opinion	1.6%
Disagree	49.2%
Strongly disagree	39.1%

There is not much you can do to prepare children for school before they are 5 years old.

Strongly agree	<1.0%
Agree	2.8%
No opinion	<1.0%
Disagree	49.0%
Strongly disagree	46.4%
DK	1.0%

Professionals providing child care to children ages 3-5 should be required to have at least two years of college.

Strongly agree	15.3%
Agree	43.3%
No opinion	5.2%
Disagree	32.3%
Strongly disagree	2.6%
DK	1.4%

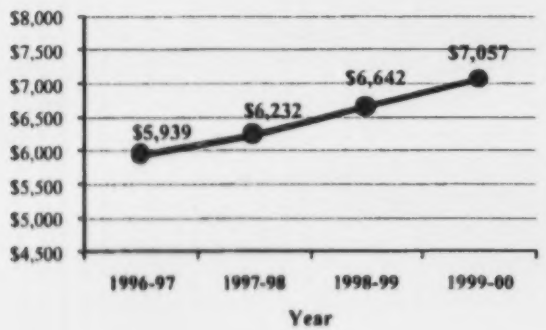


V. Funding Education in Ohio

> In the past five years, Ohio's legislature has increased funding for K-12 public schools—yet 53.3% think funding stayed the same or decreased. People who are aware of the increases in funding are less likely to believe that increased spending will directly result in improvements; people who think funding decreased or stayed the same are significantly more likely to believe that increased spending will result in improvements. Thus, knowledge matters; those who are aware of recent increases may recognize that funding is not a singular solution. As more and more people understand the facts about funding, there will likely be greater pressure to demonstrate results for the investment and a need to showcase innovative approaches to improvements in education.

According to the Ohio Department of Education's 2001 State Report Card, Ohio increased funding to school districts by over $1 billion in three years, with average annual spending per pupil increasing steadily since 1996. State spending on primary and secondary education totaled $5.1 billion in fiscal year 1997 and $7.1 billion in fiscal year 2001, an increase of 40% over the five-year period. Spending for education as a percentage of the state budget has also increased, from 35.0% in fiscal year 1997 to 37.5% in fiscal year 2001.

Average Annual Spending Per Pupil



Source: Ohio Department of Education, State Report Card 2001

Key Findings

Overall, Ohioans believe that grades K-12 should be Ohio's top funding priority. Eighty-four percent believe that between early childhood, K-12, and higher education, K-12 should be the top priority for government funding. However, Ohioans are divided as to whether higher education budgets should be reduced to pay for K-12 education—43.8% agreed that higher education budgets should be reduced; 47% disagreed.

Respondents generally believe that education funding for K-12 public schools in Ohio should be increased; 25% believe funding should be increased "greatly" and 30% believe funding should be increased "somewhat." However, there was not strong support for additional tax increases unless these increases would be combined with additional budget cuts, despite the fact that most state agencies' budgets have already been cut an additional 6%.

School budgets were also a source of some skepticism in the public view. Nearly one-third (31%) of survey respondents were not confident that local schools are doing everything they can to manage budgets efficiently, and another 7% responded, "don't know." Similarly, 35% of respondents were not confident public state universities are doing everything they can to manage budgets efficiently, and another 18% responded, "don't know."

Significantly, there was a widespread lack of knowledge of current efforts to fund education. Only 36% of respondents know that Ohio's education funding has been increased in the past five years. Furthermore, only 45% of respondents know that state government funds matched with local funds could result in nearly $23 billion for renovating or building new school facilities in Ohio. The lack of knowledge about actual spending changes has many subtle but important associations. For example, those who believe funding has recently *decreased* were more likely to believe that increased spending will result in improvements (71.9%) compared with those who realize funding has actually *increased* (44.8%).

		In the past five years, do you believe that Ohio's legislature has increased, decreased, or kept education spending at about the same level?			
Do you believe that increased spending on education will directly result in improvements?		**Increased spending**	**Kept spending about the same**	**Decreased spending**	**Total**
	Yes	44.8%	57.2%	71.9%	53.3%
	No	52.2%	36.2%	21.9%	41.8%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Although those who falsely believe Ohio's spending on education decreased over the past five years are demographically similar to those who are aware of spending increases, these two groups have different opinions about many education issues. For example, respondents who believe education funding has recently decreased also:

- Grade Ohio's public schools lower
- Grade their own local schools lower
- Believe state and local schools are on the wrong track
- See less opportunity for high school students to go to college
- Underestimate Ohio's high school graduation rate
- Do not believe that the governor and legislature have taken sufficient action to improve education
- Are less aware of Ohio's investment in building schools
- Are less aware of the recent DeRolph decisions

Although there seems to be an association between awareness of funding increases and general perceptions of Ohio's schools, what is actually driving these perceptions is still unclear. However, those who are more familiar with funding increases tend to be more favorable in their views of the schools. In addition, these individuals seem to be less confident that funding is a singular solution to current problems in education in Ohio.

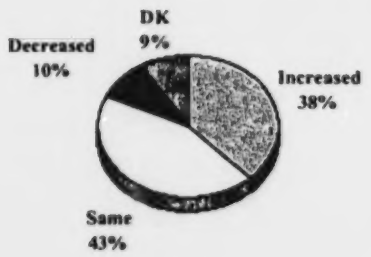
Survey Results

Do you believe that education funding for K-12 public schools in Ohio should be increased, decreased or held at about the same level?

Increased greatly	25.0%
Increased somewhat	30.0%
Same	35.7%
Decreased somewhat	3.2%
Decreased greatly	1.4%
DK	4.8%

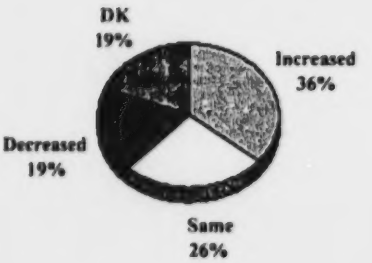
In the past five years, do you believe that Ohio's legislature has increased education spending, decreased education spending or kept education spending at about the same level?

Increased greatly	8.1%
Increased somewhat	29.8%
Same	43.8%
Decreased somewhat	6.3%
Decreased greatly	3.2%
DK	8.5%



In real dollars, has Ohio's legislature increased, decreased or kept the same level of dollars available to build or renovate school buildings in the next ten years?

Increased greatly	11.7%
Increased somewhat	24.2%
Same	26.0%
Decreased somewhat	14.3%
Decreased greatly	5.0%
DK	18.8%



True or false, state government has committed money that can be matched by local money that could result in a total of about $23 billion being spent on building or renovating school buildings in Ohio?

True	45.2%
False	29.6%
DK	24.6%

One percent of the Ohio education budget should be used for research, development, and testing of new classroom material and teaching methods.

Strongly agree	19.5%
Agree	52.6%
Disagree	11.8%
Strongly disagree	3.1%
DK	13.0%

Do you believe that increased spending on education will directly result in improvements in academic performance?

Yes	53.3%
No	41.8%
DK	4.9%

If more money is needed for public education, it will need to come from taxpayers like you. What is the fairest way to raise more money:

A combination of tax increases and budget cuts	34.7%
Lotteries and taxes on new forms of betting	20.4%
Sales tax	19.8%
Income tax	8.0%
Property tax	3.7%
Further cut other government programs even though the governor recently cut most state agencies by an additional 6%	3.1%

In dollars, how much more are you willing to pay in taxes per year to improve the quality of Ohio's K-12 education system?

0	16.4%
$1 - $100	13.3%
$101 - $500	15.2%
More than $500	5.5%
DK	48.3%

Do you believe the governor and Ohio legislature have taken sufficient action to resolve the state's education funding problem?

Yes	22.3%
No	55.4%
DK	22.3%

Ohio's economy is not as strong as it was earlier in the year. Tax revenues are lower than originally estimated, which has already led to state government budget cuts. Do you believe the state education budget should be reduced, held the same or increased?

Reduced	7.4%
Held the same	52.0%
Increased	35.0%
DK	5.6%

Should higher education budgets be reduced to pay for K-12 education?

Yes	43.0%
No	47.4%
DK	9.3%

Between early childhood, K-12 and public universities, which one should be the top priority for Ohio government spending?

Early childhood	7.4%
K-12	83.9%
Public universities	5.0%
DK	3.7%

It is more important to increase spending on K-12 education than it is to increase spending at public universities.

Strongly agree	27.6%
Agree	60.4%
Disagree	6.2%
Strongly disagree	1.5%
DK	4.0%

I'm confident that my local schools are doing everything they can to manage their budgets efficiently.

Strongly agree	9.9%
Agree	52.0%
Disagree	21.1%
Strongly disagree	9.9%
DK	7.1%

I'm confident that public state universities are doing everything they can to manage their budgets efficiently.

Strongly agree	4.3%
Agree	42.1%
Disagree	28.2%
Strongly disagree	7.4%
DK	18.0%

Va. *DeRolph vs. the State of Ohio*

On May 9, 1991, Dale R. DeRolph, on behalf of his son Nathan, filed a lawsuit, along with five school districts, against the state of Ohio stating the school funding system is unconstitutional. The lawsuit began a course of action that has resulted in three major Ohio Supreme Court decisions including the most recent (*DeRolph III*) on September 6, 2001, in which the Ohio Supreme Court ruled Ohio's school funding system unconstitutional, and mandating the legislature to make changes to the system. As of February 2002, a court-appointed mediator is attempting to reach a settlement or the case goes back to the Ohio Supreme Court.

Case History

Below are some of the major highlights from this case and information on this most recent decision.

- *May 9, 1991* - Dale R. DeRolph, on behalf of his son Nathan, filed a lawsuit, along with five school districts, against the state of Ohio stating the school funding system is unconstitutional.
- *July 1, 1994* - Judge Linton Lewis, Jr. rules that Ohio's school funding system is unconstitutional.
- *August 12, 1995* - The state appeals to the 5th District Court of Appeals saying the legislature, not the courts, should determine school aid.
- *August 30, 1995* - The court of appeals overturns Lewis' ruling 2-1.
- *October 10, 1995* - An appeal is made to the Ohio Supreme Court by The Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding, which today represents 550 of the state's 612 school districts.
- *1997* - The Ohio Supreme Court, by a 4-3 vote, declared the school funding system unconstitutional (*DeRolph I*).
- *May 2000* - The Supreme Court ruled (4-3) that although lawmakers have made strides in the right direction by increasing funding to education, the system is still unconstitutional and gave the legislature until June 15, 2001 to fix it (*DeRolph II*).
- *September 6, 2001* - The Supreme Court has ruled 4-3 that Ohio's school funding system is still unconstitutional, but if the legislature does two things, it will be constitutional (*DeRolph III*). Since the Court had no reason to believe the legislature will not do as it is told, the Supreme Court decided to no longer hold jurisdiction over the school funding issue (meaning it will not consider the case again unless the coalition renews the lawsuit). The two stipulations the Court gave were:

  1. The state must raise the minimum per-pupil funding guaranteed by the state. This will be done by altering the formula the legislature used to find the dollar amount (the formula they used excluded some districts that would raise the amount to a level which the Court believed was higher than the legislature wanted to spend).

  2. Lawmakers must increase the amount of funding that helps poor school districts pay for programs such as special education, vocational education, and transportation (this is known as parity funding). Also, the phase in period for this money was decreased from the five (5) years the legislature wanted to two (2) years.

- The Supreme Court also ruled that the legislature should consider alternative means for paying for school facility improvements, though no order was given.
- *November 2, 2001* - The Ohio Supreme Court agreed to reconsider its Sept. 6 ruling that ordered the state to provide $1.2 billion more a year for public schools retroactive to last July 1.
- *November 16, 2001* - The Ohio Supreme Court decided to hand the case over to a mediator to be chosen from a list of qualified candidates. Mediation will take an undetermined amount of time.

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Key Findings

Despite extensive media coverage, only 50.6% of Ohioans knew that Ohio's Supreme Court was deciding a lawsuit that could find Ohio's system of school funding to be unconstitutional and those who are aware of the case don't feel that they know very much (5.8% know "a lot" and 15.3% know "a little"). Of the people that were aware of the case, 62.9% agree that the Ohio Supreme Court needs to be involved.

Most respondent believe that the Supreme Court decision will have some impact on the quality of education in their communities (69%), as well as on themselves, personally (69%). Most expect any impact to be small, but positive. Although 67% of respondents believed that the Supreme Court decision would have a positive impact on Ohio's academic success in years to come, respondents seemed to acknowledge that it will take more than additional funding to address specific problems. For example, only 47% expected that the Supreme Court decision would have a positive impact on graduation rates in years to come.

In terms of new sources of funding, participants were favorable towards expanding the Ohio Lottery (60% in favor), a combination of tax increases and budget cuts (55% in favor), and an increase Ohio's state sales tax (53% in favor). However, respondents were firmly against pooling business and property taxes to evenly distribute them; 70% were opposed to this idea when it meant some districts will receive less funding.

Pre-Decision Questions

True or false, Ohio's Supreme Court is deciding a lawsuit that could find Ohio's system of school funding to be unconstitutional.

True	50.6%
False	25.2%
DK	24.2%

The Ohio Supreme Court case dealing with the constitutionality of Ohio's school-funding system is the DeRolph court case. Have you heard of this case before today?

Yes	28.4%
No	70.0%
DK	1.6%

How much do you know about the case [decision]... a lot, a little, not very much, or nothing, only the name or that the court case exists.

	Pre-decision*	Post-decision**
A lot	5.8%	5.9%
A little	15.3%	20.1%
Not very much	5.6%	13.9%
Only the name	1.8%	59.4%

* Asked only of the 143 respondents who answered "yes" on the previous question.
**Asked of all 323 respondents who participated in the second poll.

The Ohio Supreme Court needs to be involved in resolving Ohio's school funding issues.

Strongly agree	13.7%
Agree	49.2%
No opinion	11.5%
Disagree	18.8%
Strongly disagree	3.4%
DK	3.4%

Post-Decision Questions[4]

Overall, do you believe that the Ohio Supreme Court decision will have a great impact, small impact or no impact on you personally?

Great impact	17.1%
Small impact	51.9%
No impact	23.3%
DK	7.8%

Do you think the impact will be positive or negative?*

Positive	56.2%
Negative	31.5%
DK	12.4%

* Asked only of the respondents who indicated the decision would have an impact on the previous question

Overall, do you believe that the Ohio Supreme Court decision will have a great impact, small impact or no impact on the quality of education in your community?

Great impact	20.2%
Small impact	48.8%
No impact	20.9%
DK	10.1%

Do you think the impact will be positive or negative?*

Positive	60.7%
Negative	29.2%
DK	10.1%

* Asked only of the respondents who indicated the decision would have an impact on the previous question

[4] Three hundred and twenty three respondents from the initial poll participated in the follow-up panel. See Methodology section of this report for a full description of survey procedures.

Should the Ohio Supreme Court have been involved in the school funding issue OR is this a policy decision for Ohio's legislators?

Ohio Supreme Court should be involved	46.5%
Policy decision for Ohio's Legislators	45.7%
DK	7.0%

The Ohio Supreme Court decision will have a positive impact on Ohio's academic success in years to come.

Strongly agree	8.0%
Agree	48.6%
Disagree	16.4%
Strongly disagree	5.3%
DK	21.7%

The Ohio Supreme Court decision will have a positive impact on Ohio's high school graduation rates in years to come.

Strongly agree	5.6%
Agree	41.5%
Disagree	21.4%
Strongly disagree	6.5%
DK	25.1%

The Ohio Supreme Court decision will increase student success in school districts that receive more money than they are presently receiving.

Strongly agree	9.3%
Agree	44.0%
Disagree	17.6%
Strongly disagree	7.1%
DK	22.0%

Ohio lawmakers have acted responsibly in helping to resolve Ohio's school funding issues.

Strongly agree	2.5%
Agree	35.9%
Disagree	30.7%
Strongly disagree	14.9%
DK	16.1%

Ohio's Supreme Court decided for the third time in ten years that Ohio's system of funding K-12 education is unconstitutional despite the fact that Ohio's legislature increased funding by $1.4 billion in the last two years alone. To fix the problem, Ohio's legislature may be required to spend more state money on Ohio's education system. There are several options for finding the additional money. Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose the following options:

	% Total Favor	% Total Oppose
Expand the Ohio Lottery to include video lottery terminals at each of Ohio's seven horse race tracks	60.3%	18.9%
A combination of tax increases and budget cuts	54.6%	22.6%
Increase Ohio's state sales tax	52.6%	27.2%
Increase Ohio's income taxes	36.1%	35.9%
Further cut other government programs even though the governor recently cut most state agencies by an additional 6%.	30.4%	35.3%

Some people have recommended pooling business and property taxes to evenly distribute them, which means some school districts will receive less money than they currently receive. Do you favor or oppose this option?

Strongly favor	8.7%
Somewhat favor	14.2%
Somewhat oppose	29.4%
Strongly oppose	40.6%
DK	7.1%

If business and property taxes were evenly distributed, do you think your school district would receive more money, less money or about the same money?

More money	23.8%
Less money	25.7%
About the same	39.9%
DK	10.5%

VI. Demographics

Have you ever volunteered at an elementary, middle, or high school in Ohio?

	Panel 1	Panel 2
Yes	62.1%	68.7%
No	37.3%	31.1%
DK	<1.0%	–

What has been your primary source for new information about the state's education issues?

	Panel 1	Panel 2
City newspaper	31.9%	35.0%
TV	18.8%	14.6%
Teachers/local schools	13.5%	14.6%
Local newspaper	11.9%	10.8%
Radio	3.8%	3.1%
Internet	2.2%	3.1%
Other	13.1%	14.9%
DK	4.2%	4.0%

Voting preference

	Panel 1	Panel 2
Democrat	32.5%	33.7%
Republican	26.6%	29.1%
Independent	26.0%	26.3%
Other	5.8%	5.3%
DK	4.6%	3.1%
RF	4.6%	2.5%

Age

	Panel 1	Panel 2
18 - 25	8.5%	8.5%
26 - 35	20.7%	19.4%
36 - 45	23.3%	23.2%
46 - 65	30.4%	31.7%
Over 65	17.1%	17.2%

Highest level of education completed

	Panel 1	Panel 2
Elementary school	<1.0%	<1.0%
Some high school, no degree	8.5%	8.7%
High school graduate	28.6%	26.6%
Technical or vocational school	4.0%	3.1%
Some college, no degree	13.9%	14.9%
Two-year college degree	10.7%	10.8%
Four-year college degree	18.8%	19.8%
Post-graduate education, no additional degree	4.4%	5.6%
Advanced degree	9.5%	9.9%
DK	<1.0%	<1.0%
RF	<1.0%	–

Race

	Panel 1	Panel 2
Caucasian	85.3%	85.8%
African American	8.1%	7.4%
Hispanic	<1.0%	<1.0%
Asian	<1.0%	<1.0%
Other	2.4%	3.1%
DK	<1.0%	<1.0%
RF	2.2%	2.2%

Current employment status

	Panel 1	Panel 2
Employed full time	56.7%	56.0%
Employed part time	8.1%	8.4%
Unemployed	3.0%	2.2%
Student	2.8%	4.0%
Homemaker	6.7%	6.8%
Retired	21.6%	22.0%
DK	<1.0%	<1.0%
RF	<1.0%	<1.0%

Marital status

	Panel 1	Panel 2
Single, never married	16.9%	16.1%
Married	54.8%	58.5%
Separated	2.2%	1.5%
Divorced	14.9%	12.4%
Widowed	10.3%	10.5%
DK	<1.0%	–
RF	<1.0%	<1.0%

Spouse's current employment status

	Panel 1	Panel 2
Employed full time	59.4%	58.7%
Employed part time	8.3%	8.5%
Unemployed	3.3%	2.1%
Student	1.1%	1.1%
Homemaker	10.1%	12.2%
Retired	17.0%	16.9%
DK	<1.0%	--
RF	<1.0%	<1.0%

How many adults over the age of 18 live in your household?

	Panel 1	Panel 2
1	35.5%	32.8%
2	53.4%	56.0%
3	7.7%	8.4%
4	2.0%	1.9%
5 or more	1.4%	<1.0%
DK	<1.0%	<1.0%
RF	<1.0%	<1.0%

How many children under 18 live in your household?

	Panel 1	Panel 2
0	56.2%	54.8%
1	16.9%	17.3%
2	15.5%	17.3%
3	8.5%	7.7%
4	2.2%	2.2%
5 or more	<1.0%	<1.0%
DK	<1.0%	<1.0%

Do you have a child in your household...

	Panel 1	Panel 2
Age 5 and under	43.8%	40.0%
Age 6-10	42.0%	40.7%
Age 11-15	38.0%	42.1%
Age 16-18	20.1%	21.4%

What type of school do your children attend?

	Panel 1	Panel 2
Preschool	16.4%	17.9%
Public school	67.6%	69.0%
Private school	10.5%	8.3%
Parochial school	7.3%	6.9%
Home school	3.7%	3.4%

Do you consider the area in which you live to be urban, suburban, small town, or rural?

	Panel 1	Panel 2
Urban	21.8%	21.7%
Suburban	34.3%	36.2%
Small town	26.0%	25.7%
Rural	15.7%	15.2%
DK	2.0%	1.2%
RF	<1.0%	–

Into which of the following broad categories does your total annual household income fall?

	Panel 1	Panel 2
Less than $15,000	9.3%	9.6%
$15,000 - $24,999	12.3%	10.5%
$25,000 - $49,999	29.2%	31.3%
$50,000 - $75,000	21.4%	21.4%
More than $75,000	15.5%	16.7%
DK	3.2%	2.5%
RF	9.1%	8.0%

Sex

	Panel 1	Panel 2
Male	44.2%	41.2%
Female	55.8%	58.8%

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